REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

I. Priority Document

Applicants submit herewith a certified copy of priority document JP 2004-52802.

II. Amendments to the Claims

Independent claims 1 and 3 have been amended to clarify features of the invention recited therein and to further distinguish the present invention from the reference relied upon in the rejection discussed below.

III. 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejection

Claims 1, 3 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kojima (JP 2003-323150). This rejection is believed clearly inapplicable to amended independent claims 1 and 3 and claim 4 that depends therefrom for the following reasons.

Independent claim 1 recites a method including generating, during a sustain period, a sustain discharge by alternately applying sustain pulses to a scan electrode and a sustain electrode of a discharge cell. Further, claim 1 recites that (1) a rise time of a sustain pulse applied to the scan electrode (during the sustain period) is shortened at a frequency of once every three times a sustain pulse is applied thereto, such that the sustain pulse having the shortened rise time has a shortest rise time from among the sustain pulses applied to the scan electrode and (2)

a rise time of a sustain pulse applied to the sustain electrode (during the sustain period) is shortened at a frequency of once every three times a sustain pulse is applied thereto, such that the sustain pulse having the shortened rise time has a shortest rise time from among the sustain pulses applied to the sustain electrode during the sustain period. Finally, claim 1 recites that (3) a plurality of sustain pulses having the shortened rise time are applied to the scan electrode and the sustain electrode during the sustain period. Kojima fails to disclose or suggest above-mentioned distinguishing features (1)-(3) as recited in independent claim 1.

Rather, Figure 4 of Kojima teaches that the rise time t0 of only the first sustain pulse applied to the scan electrode 17Y is shortened. In addition, Figure 5 of Kojima teaches that the rise time t0 of only the first sustain pulse applied to the sustain electrode 17X and the scan electrode 17Y is shortened. Moreover, Figure 6 of Kojima teaches that the rise time t0 of only the first sustain pulse applied to the scan electrode 17Y is shortened, and teaches that the rise times t1a, t1b and t1c applied to the sustain electrode 17X are longer than the rise time t0 (i.e., $t0<t1a$, $t0<t1b$, and $t0<t1c$) (see pulses 32a, 32b and 32c of Fig 6). Still referring to Figure 6, it appears that Kojima teaches that when rise times of the sustain pulse applied to the sustain electrode 17X are varied, the rise time of the sustain pulse applied to the scan electrode 17Y is longer than t0 (see Fig. 6, wherein, when rise times t1a, t1b and t1c are varied, the rise times of the sustain pulse applied to the scan electrode 17Y is longer than t0).

Thus, in view of the above, it is clear that Kojima teaches that the only the first sustain pulse applied to the scan electrode during a sustain period has the shortest rise time of t0 (see Figs. 4 and 5), but fails to disclose or suggest that (1) a rise time of a sustain pulse applied to the scan electrode is shortened at a frequency of once every three times, such that the sustain pulse

having the shortened rise time has a shortest rise time from among the sustain pulses applied to the scan electrode and (2) a rise time of a sustain pulse applied to the sustain electrode is shortened at a frequency of once every three times, such that the sustain pulse having the shortened rise time has a shortest rise time from among the sustain pulses applied to the sustain electrode during the sustain period, wherein (3) a plurality of sustain pulses having the shortened rise time are applied to the scan electrode and the sustain electrode during the sustain period, as required by claim 1.

In other words, Kojima does not disclose or suggest that the shortened sustain pulse that is applied to the scan/sustain electrodes at a frequency of once every three times, such that the shortened sustain pulse has the shortest rise time from among sustain pulses applied to the scan/sustain electrodes, and such a plurality of sustain pulses having the shortest rise time are applied to the scan/sustain electrodes during the sustain period, as required by claim 1, because Kojima merely identifies various patterns wherein the rise time of only the first pulse is shortened.

Therefore, because of the above-mentioned distinctions it is believed clear that independent claim 1 and claim 4 that depends therefrom would not have been obvious in view of Kojima.

Furthermore, there is no disclosure or suggestion in Kojima or elsewhere in the prior art of record which would have caused a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify Kojima to obtain the invention of independent claim 1. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 1 and claim 4 that depends therefrom are clearly allowable over the prior art of record.

Independent claim 3 is directed to a method and recites features that correspond to the above-mentioned distinguishing features of independent claim 1. Thus, for the same reasons discussed above, it is respectfully submitted that claim 3 is allowable over Kojima.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance and an early notification thereof is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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